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INTRODUCTION:

The consequences of deployment and combat exposure can affect marriage and families negatively. The study will compare telephone support/discussion groups to telephone/computer education groups and to usual care as strategies to assist spouses of returning Iraq and Afghanistan service members. The goal is to build spouses' resilience to cope with reintegration challenges, help them serve as a support system for service members, and ease the transition for families post-deployment. Some of the barriers to participating in an intervention, such as lack of local services, access, childcare, and distances, are eliminated by use of the telephone. The study will enroll 225 spouses. In the Telephone Discussion groups, a group facilitator and participants will focus on education, skills building and support. Education Only telephone/computer groups will provide the same education content, without skills building or support. Each group will meet 12 times over 6 months. Content includes ways the returning service member, spouse and family may have changed during deployment; negotiation in personal relationships; strategies to reduce or eliminate reintegration difficulties; strategies to support the returning service member; and cues to alert spouses when to seek mental health services for the family or themselves. Usual Care participants will receive a workshop focusing on the same topics after their study participation.

BODY:

A change in the study dates had been requested at the beginning of the study when the extra study arm was added. (Although additional funding was added, the increase in time for recruitment was not included in the revised contract.) During this year, we have resubmitted the request, with the original amended SOW. We have not yet received a reply. A second amended SOW is shown below and in Appendix 1, which requests extension until June 2014.

Task 1: Develop Manual of Operations (MOP) Months 1-7, October, 2009-April 2010.

All activities and products are completed for the Manual of Operations.

Activities

- Finalize support group format
- Finalize support group materials
- Finalize education group sessions
- Finalize screening materials
- Finalize data collection protocol/battery
- Develop and print brochures and posters

Products

- Support group format, topics and scripts
- Participant Workbooks and Welcome Packs
- Education group format, topics and scripts
- Screening forms and scripts
- Data collection forms, scripts and documentation
- Brochures and posters
- Participant Workbooks and Welcome Packs

Task 2: IRB approval

Months 1-8, October, 2009-May 2010.

All activities and products are completed for IRB approval. Final Memphis IRB approval to add the Educational Only arm was received 5/27/10 and HRPO approval was received on 6/15/10.

Activities

- Develop informed consent documents

Products

- Approved consent

Task 3: Hire and train personnel**Months 1-5, October, 2009-February 2010**

Two staff members left and new staff were hired in July and August, 2012. Two University of Memphis Psychology graduate student interns are also working with the project.

Activities

- Write job descriptions, interview, hire, train

Products

- Trained and certified staff

Task 4: Recruitment and Randomization**Months 8-35, May 2010-December 2012**

Recruitment began June 16, 2010. Email announcements have been sent to Guard, Reserve, and Active Duty contacts. The Spouse READI website, Facebook entry, and email contact are all available. See Appendix for URLs.

Activities

- Work with recruitment sources
- Telephone and screen potential participants
- Randomize participants

Current Products

- Recruitment sources contacted
- 298 spouses screened
- 206 participants randomized
- 17 participants discontinued

Task 5: Intervention (Telephone Groups)**Months 8-41, May 2010-June 2013**

Telephone support/discussion groups began August 31, 2010.

Activities

- Schedule and provide groups for intervention participants

Current Products

- Four groups ongoing

Task 6: Attention Control (Education Groups)**Months 8-41, May 2010-June 2013**

Education webinar groups began August 31, 2010.

Activities

- Schedule and provide sessions for education participants

Current Products

- Three groups ongoing

Task 7: Data Collection/Data Entry/Cleaning**Months 8-48, May 2010-January 2014**Activities

- Collect full data at baseline, six and twelve months
- Collect partial data at three and nine months
- Enter and clean data

Current Products

- 206 baselines collected
- 135 3-month follow-ups collected
- 102 6-month follow-ups collected
- 84 9-month follow-ups collected
- 64 12-month follow-ups collected
- 46 project evaluations collected
- Completed data entry and cleaning for baseline, 3-month, 6-month, 9-month, and 12-month data collections and project evaluations

Task 8: Control Group Workshops**Months 20-49, May 2011-February 2014**Activities

- Provide one-one workshops for control group participants

Products

- Workshops provided

Task 10: Preparation and Dissemination of Results Months 31-51, April 2012-June 2014

Activities

- Prepare papers and presentations

Products

- Papers and Presentations

See Outcomes

KEY RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None to date.

REPORTABLE OUTCOMES: (all slides available on request)

Spouse Telephone Support (STS).

In May 2010, Public Law 111-163 Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 was signed into law. The Spouse Telephone Support program was implemented by the VA for post 9/11 spouses from any medical center. This program began in October 2011. Memphis VAMC staff provide the training, certifying and coaching for VA staff across the 152 facilities to be able to provide the STS program. VA Memphis also supplies the STS Spouse Workbooks. To date, date, 63 sites have been trained, 106 staff trained and 48 certified; 86 spouse caregivers in STS groups with 362 total sessions provided.

Nichols, L, Martindale-Adams, J. Reintegration: Support for Spouses Post Deployment. VA Medical Center, Research Service Conference, December 2, 2011.

Martindale-Adams, J, Nichols, L. Research with Post 9/11 Spouses. VA National Caregiver Research Interest Group (CGRIG), 2/14/12.

Nichols, L, Martindale-Adams, J. Spouse READI: Telephone Support (Resilience Education and Deployment Information). U.S. Army Military Operational Medicine Research Program (MOMRP)/Joint Program Committee for Military Operational Medicine (JPC5) In Progress Review, August 2, 2012.

CONCLUSION:

REFERENCES and SUPPORTING DATA: N/A

APPENDICES:

- Amended SOW
- Spouse READI Media, email, URLs for Spouse READI website and Facebook
- Presentation slides – Spouse READI

SPOUSE STATEMENT OF WORK (SOW) Proposed

Task 1: Develop Manual of Operations (MOP)**Months 1-7, October, 2009-April 2010**Activities

- Finalize support group format
- Finalize support group materials
- Finalize education group sessions
- Finalize screening materials
- Finalize data collection protocol/battery
- Develop and print brochures and posters

Products

- Support group format, topics and scripts
- Participant Workbooks and Welcome Packs
- Education group format, topics and scripts
- Screening forms and scripts
- Data collection forms, scripts and documentation
- Brochures and posters
- Participant Workbooks and Welcome Packs

Task 2: IRB approval**Months 1-8, October, 2009-May 2010**Activities

- Develop informed consent documents

Products

- Approved consent

Task 3: Hire and train personnel**Months 1-5, October, 2009-February 2010**Activities

- Write job descriptions, interview, hire, train

Products

- Trained and certified staff

Task 4: Recruitment and Randomization**Months 8-35, May 2010-December 2012**Activities

- Work with recruitment sources
- Telephone and screen potential participants
- Randomize participants

Current Products

- Approximately 450 spouses screened
- 225 participants recruited

Task 5: Intervention (Telephone Groups)**Months 8-41, May 2010-June 2013**Activities

- Schedule and provide groups for intervention participants

Current Products

- Four groups ongoing

Task 6: Attention Control (Education Groups)**Months 8-41, May 2010-June 2013**

Education webinar groups began August 31, 2010.

Activities

- Schedule and provide sessions for education participants

Current Products

- Groups provided

Task 7: Data Collection/Data Entry/Cleaning**Months 8-48, May 2010-January 2014**Activities

- Collect full data at baseline, six and twelve months
- Collect partial data at three and nine months
- Enter and clean data

Current Products

- Completed data entry

Task 8: Control Group Workshops**Months 20-49, May 2011-February 2014**Activities

- Provide one-one workshops for control group participants

Products

- Workshops provided

Task 9: Data Analysis**Months 33-50, June 2012-November 2013**Activities

- Complete data analysis

Products

- Completed data analysis

Task 10: Preparation and Dissemination of Results**Months 31-51, April 2012-January 2014**Activities

- Prepare papers and presentations

Products

- Papers and Presentations

Spouse READI media

Email: vhamemsbm@va.gov

Website: www.memphis.va.gov/spousesupport

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/notes/memphis-va-medical-center/spouse-readi-study-focus-on-helping-families-post-deployment/405864899824>